Information and Communications Technology Applications in Support of Municipal and Local Development in Bolivia

Quarterly Report II
January 1 – March 31, 2003

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I. Introduction

The second quarter of the *Enlared Municipal* project was marked by the merging of two fundamental milestones that will define the development of the Internet Portal's future activities.

On March 18, the Portal's new image and services were presented at the offices of the Vice-Minister of the Republic of Bolivia. The services were incorporated into a new platform created by ICMA Bolivia that responds to the requirements (usage, navigation and speed) of the connectivity actually available in Bolivia. The design was also created based on user demand. The improvements have transformed *Enlared* into a more agile, attractive Portal with enhanced services for the municipalities of Bolivia.

Secondly, *Enlared* has positioned itself during this quarter as the main promoter of E-procurement pilot projects for small purchases. The project analyzed the norms that should be established in Bolivia for the use of online purchases and initiated contact with the selected municipalities to establish agreements with them. *Enlared* served as a bridge between the technical, operational, and functional sides of the system, incorporating the work of SIGMA, Microsoft, VESTA, the *Unidad de Normas*, the municipalities and the providers.

The project also took the first steps to begin the Training for Trainers activity that will be carried out by *Enlared* during the rest of the year.

Lastly, it should be added that the work of the *Enlared* team was strongly impaired by the theft that occurred at the office on January 20 and by the civil disobedience that occurred in the country on the February 12-13.. These events delayed the unveiling of the Portal's new image and services at the offices of the Vice President of the Republic on February 25. Despite these setbacks, ICMA Bolivia fully met the goals of its work plan and completed additional tasks not included in the plan.

II. Main Accomplishments this Quarter

Following is a detail of specific activities carried out during the quarter.

    a. Presentation of Enlared's new image and services: On March 18, 2003, ICMA Bolivia unveiled *Enlared*'s new image and services at the offices of the Vice President of the Republic. The event was attended by government authorities—the Ministers of Sustainable Development and Labor, the representative from the Vice Presidency responsible for the fight against corruption and others—members of USAID, ICMA Washington, municipal authorities, members of the international cooperation community and the private sector, municipal supporters, etc. The launching focused on the potential that technology has to improve municipal transparency.

    The new image boasts a much simpler navigation interface than the previous one and allows the user to conduct faster, more efficient searches. In addition to presenting new services, the Portal's technology team sought to promote the services already offered. For example, they worked on the configuration, implementation and integration of forum

services, survey and "contact us" features. The *Enlared* team also worked on the definition of the new design with a subcontracted company.

b.   Enlared Municipal's New Services: *Enlared*'s new look offers new services that respond to the demands of users of the Portal. These services are divided according to the three central pillars of the project: strengthening of the Bolivian associative system, cap@citacion (training) and information services.

1. Strengthening of the Bolivian associative system: Information on the Bolivian associative system, FAM Bolivia, the departmental associations of municipalities and mancomunidades of the country. Information on legislation, etc.

2. Cap@citacion (Training): E-classroom, Advice and electronic library, etc.

3. Information services: MUNIDATA (information on municipalities), Comun@ (Enlared's Municipal Information Bulletin), etc.

c.   "Municipality Responds": This new service is presented in *Enlared* in cooperation with the UNDP and other organizations. Its goal is to create an expanded consultation network for the Portal's users. *Enlared* respond to inquiries on municipal topics. In addition, ICMA Bolivia participated in the creation of new terms of reference for the operation of "Municipality Responds", which will be financed by UNDP. *Enlared*'s technology team also participated in the configuration, implementation and integration of the "Municipality Responds" feature. To date, many requests have already been routed and answered.

d.   Survey on the Status of Connectivity in Bolivia: Following a selection study, AES enterprises was selected to conduct the survey to gather information on 300 municipalities during January-February 2003. Subsequently, KPMG statistically analyzed the data, which centered around the types of connections that exist in the municipalities and mayors' offices of Bolivia. This study appears on *Enlared* and is exclusive data in the country.

e.   Optimization of Contents: A database of Joint Participation and HIPC administration for 2003 with the latest HIPC adjustment of 7% was created and introduced into the Portal. In addition, as of February, the Portal includes all the current norms and regulations on decentralization.

f.   Consolidation and development of the E-procurement Pilot Project: During the first quarter of the year, work was done in three basic areas: the selection of participating municipalities and their introduction to the system, the creation of the necessary standards for a project with these characteristics, and the technical parameters that the system requires were set up. The concrete activities conducted were:

1)   ***Initial Convocation and Workshop*:** After issuing formal invitations to five municipalities—El Alto, Santa Cruz, Sucre, Tarija, and Cochabamba—on February 5, all those interested in attending the E-procurement presentation gathered in the offices of *Enlared Municipal*. All members of the project execution team (*Enlared*, *Unidad de Normas,* SIGMA, VESTA and Microsoft), the FAM President, the mayor of Cochabamba, four major officials and others involved in the project attended the event. For the workshop, *Enlared* created a demo Web site for the participants to work with during the event (see [www.e*nlared*.org.bo/municompras](http://www.enlared.org.bo/municompras)).

2)   ***Signing of Institutional Agreements:*** To ensure the proper implementation of the programmed activities, agreements were signed with the selected municipalities. To date, the following municipal governments have provided their signatures: El Alto, Sucre and Tarija. Cochabamba is in the process of signing and Santa Cruz was not interested in signing the agreement and was therefore excluded from the pilot project. Following each signature of the agreement, *Enlared* and the *Unidad de Normas* made a specific presentation by municipality of the system and identified key personnel. The presentations took place as follows: Cochabamba (March 12), Sucre (March 13), Tarija (March 14), El Alto (March 29).

3)   ***Draft of Regulations:*** *Enlared Municipal* actively participated in the review and provided recommendations to the draft regulations for the E-procurement small purchases system. The draft was submitted to participating municipal governments for their comments.

4)   ***Frequently Asked Questions:*** *Enlared* created a document consisting of frequently asked questions which was then revised and updated by the Microsoft team. This document will be provided to the systems administrators and the municipal departmental associations.

5)   ***Other documents and activities:*** During the quarter there were other key documents created for the functioning and reproduction of the pilot project; for example, in addition to the first draft of the frequently asked questions document, the first draft of the pilot implementation guide was developed. Concurrently, the schedule of system trials was created for each one of the participating municipalities. The trials are programmed for the first half of April.

h.   Inclusion of New Partners and Users—Municipal Departmental Associations: During the first quarter, four municipal associations joined the network of *Enlared* partners based on the stipulations established at the start of the contract: *Enlared* will redefine its partners in terms of commitments, actions and results. The associations that joined during this quarter are:

- ⁰   Association of Municipalities of Tarija, AMT: 1/20/2003
- o   Association of Municipalities of Beni, AMDEBENI: 3/15/2003

- Association of Municipalities of Oruro, AMDEOR: 3/25/2003
- Association of Municipalities of Chuquisaca, AMDECH: 3/25/2003

As a result, six of the nine departmental associations are now *Enlared*'s partners.

i.   Implementation of the Virtual Information Agency: During this quarter, *Enlared*'s virtual information agency sent an average of two news items per week to the media. Out of this number, approximately 50 percent were published using [www.e*nlared*.org.bo](www.enlared.org.bo) as a source. *Enlared* has 10 correspondents—one for each of the nine associations of municipal departments and one representative of FAM-ACOBOL, who each send *Enlared* an average of four information items per month.

j.   Strengthening of the FAM: During this quarter, *Enlared* published all of the news information and press releases issued by the FAM. This information was disseminated through a variety of means, including news reports, interviews, analysis, etc.

k.   Business Plan with the Portal's Partners: During the quarter, *Enlared* began to work on individualized business plans with each of the partners that have signed an agreement with *Enlared*. Staff provided follow-up to ensure each partner's compliance with its obligations under the agreement. The Plan's objective is to help partners generate their own income through *Enlared*. To date, all partners have an *Enlared* Business Plan.

l.   Updating Information: Each day, about four new news items are posted on *Enlared*'s home page. This resulted in more than 200 new news items for the quarter. Also, in February an agreement was signed between *Enlared* and the Institute of Research and Municipal Development (INIDEM) that enables *Enlared* to digitally disseminate all specialized information on local governance that INIDEM holds.

m.   Incorporation of Student Interns into the Enlared team: The ICMA Bolivia team was supported in its activities by interns who helped in the areas of information dissemination and content development. Two students joined the team in January and spent February and March gathering information on grants databases, workshops, database lists, tourism sites, etc. from all the municipalities. This, in turn, enabled them to update the Portal's content. One intern created a compendium of tourism attractions by municipality and another pulled together information for about 70 percent of the municipal database in addition to assisting in gathering data for the survey. The idea of incorporating new scholarship recipients in other areas of the project is a possibility.

n.   Specific Accomplishments of the *Enlared* Technology Team:

1. Reinstallation and configuration of the Web and Mail server (upgrade of hardware)
2. Configuration, implementation and integration of "Municipality Responds" (advising: phase 1) on the new site

3. Follow-up and evaluation of the E-procurement pilot
4. Construction of the Municompras (municipal purchases) site (http://www.e*nlared*.org.bo/municompras)
5. Migration and optimization of the FAM and ACOBOL Web sites (http://www.e*nlared*.org.bo/fam, http://www.e*nlared*.org.bo/acobol)
6. Design and publication of the *Enlared* news bulletin
7. 100% of news information was migrated to the new site
8. Upgrade of survey function to enable decentralized administration of this service
9. Decentralization of the administration of information by areas (Associative System, Association Strengthening, Information Agency, Training)
10. Integration of MUNIDATA (Phase I)
11. Integration of Laws and Norms (Phase I)
12. Integration of Financing and Projects (Phase I)
13. Integration of Municipal Calendar (Phase I)
14. Integration of Virtual Classroom (Phase I)
15. Integration of E-library
16. Support for users and visitors
17. Creation of demo site—virtual showcase (www.e*nlared*.org.bo/chiquitania/vitrina)

III. Challenges/Issues of Concern Affecting Implementation and Actions Taken

a. Transfer of Responsibility of *Enlared* to the FAM: During a meeting with USAID/Bolivia in March, *Enlared* staff was asked to give priority to exploring the goal of having the FAM take over the administration of *Enlared* beginning in February 2004. With this in mind, during the upcoming quarter, the creation of a consultative council will be encouraged. The council will consist of members of ICMA Bolivia and representatives of the Departmental Associations. The objective of the council will be to exchange information and criteria that directly involve the Bolivian associative system and the future administration of *Enlared*'s activities. Concurrently, and upon USAID/Bolivia's request, an analysis will be created that stipulates key milestones, which FAM would have to achieve in order to take over *Enlared* by February 2004.

b. The municipalities participating in the E-procurement pilot must demonstrate they can operate the system: During the next quarter, the four municipalities that have established an agreement with *Enlared*—El Alto, Tarija, Sucre, and Cochabamba—will need to show that its officials and providers are capable of successfully operating the system. In this area, both political willingness and political change could affect the success of the pilot project once training activities begin.

IV. Projected Activities for the Next Quarter (April-June 2003)

1. Conduct trial pilots of the E-procurement system and the joint creation of the final report with Microsoft, VESTA and the *Unidad de Normas*.

2. Conclude the pilot project for the E-procurement system. Once the pilot project is finished, training will have been completed for municipal officials and providers. In addition, recommendations will be completed as well as a proposal on norms.

3. Launch the E-procurement pilot. The four participating municipalities will demonstrate online the possibilities that the system offers.

4. Form the FAM-*Enlared* Consultative Council.

5. Create radio micro-programs regarding *Enlared*'s services at the national level.

6. Launch "associations week" and online contests.

7. Launch dissemination campaign for E-procurement pilot project.

8. Hire a news correspondent for *Enlared*-Pando.

9. Create *Enlared* dissemination materials.

10. Provide continuous service under the "Municipality Responds" program.

11. Finalize individualized business plans with at least AMDECRUZ, Mancomunidad de la Gran Chiquitanía, AMT, AMDECH, and AMDEOR.

12. Incorporate the last norm (Laws and Decrees) on municipal decentralization into the Portal.

13. Finish gathering basic data on all 9 municipal departmental associations for the *Enlared* database.

14. C@pacitación: the *Enlared* training program will complete the following activities during the second quarter of the year:

   a. Establish contact with entities that offer training and scholarships in the areas of local development and decentralization in order to update the contents of the Portal.
   b. Notification of the winner of the bidding process for training. Negotiation and signing of the contract with the winning educational entity resulting from the bidding process. Technical explanation to the educational entity of the tool developed by *Enlared* to develop Web sites.
   c. Explanation to the educational entity of all the inherent aspects of training of trainers. Coordination with the entity on the contents of the first training course for trainers and of the contents of all material to be handed to participants.

d. Follow-up on the preparation of materials produced by the educational entity for Course 1 of training trainers.
e. Promotion and invitation to Course 1 of training of trainers to be held in Santa Cruz, La Paz and Sucre: partner associations and other interested institutions.
f. Execution of Course 1 of training of trainers in Santa Cruz. Evaluation of immediate results (May). General evaluation of Course 1 conducted in Santa Cruz, and adjustments.
g. Execution of Course 1 of training of trainers in La Paz. Evaluation of immediate results.
h. Creation of the content for Course 2 of training of trainers.
i. Execution of Course 1 of training of trainers in Sucre. Evaluation of immediate results.
j. Creation of material for Course 2 of training of trainers. Review of materials for Course 2 and adjustments. Promotion and invitation to Course 2 of training of trainers: associations and mancomunidades and other institutions. Logistical arrangements for conducting Course 2 of training of trainers in Santa Cruz.
k. First replication phase assigned to the trainers of the municipal associations and mancomunidades: workshops 1 and 2 (internet and website). Formation of control groups by workshop and adjustment to follow-up and evaluation tools.
l. Evaluation of the application of knowledge and abilities acquired by participants in the internet and website workshop: evaluations of control groups.

15. Portal's usability validation. Creation of report with the results of the validation. Validation of E-FAM and Virtual showcase.